



Office of the Governor

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNOR

PRESS RELEASE

03/09/2009 GAAS:088:09 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gov. Schwarzenegger Supports Extending Federal Foster Care Benefits

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issued the following statement today in support of extending AFDC-FC benefits to California's foster youth up to the age of 21:

"I am committed to working with Assembly Speaker Karen Bass and Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg on a bipartisan solution that ensures our children and youth in foster care are provided with the tools needed to succeed at life. Along with our federal partners, together we can better equip our youth by making sure they continue to have access to important resources and services as they transition into adulthood. I look forward to continue working across the aisle with the legislature and our federal and local partners on an issue important to so many Californians."

The Governor last year signed a package of bills aimed at improving the lives of children and youth in California's foster care system by making it easier for caregivers and providers to access the resources they need to protect one of the state's most vulnerable populations. The legislation makes it easier for caregivers who receive CalWORKS grants to reapply after relocating within the state, increases access to the alternative foster care programs for youth in need of additional support, and provides for the continuation of federal child welfare funding.

Last year, the Governor also signed AB 2310 and AB 2483 to ensure that youth aging out of the foster care system have access to resources and services, including financial aid, career services and other benefits. In addition, the Governor's Department of Social Services worked in conjunction with the U.S. Social Security Administration to quickly adopt a federal provision in 2008 to ensure implementation of AB 1331 by Assemblymember Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa) making it possible for foster youth to leave foster care with approved benefits in place rather than waiting months to receive them.

In 2007, the Governor signed a series of bills to further enhance foster care services in California. And in 2006, the Governor signed a package of legislation designed to improve California's foster care system and the safety of children entrusted to the state's care. Also in 2006, the Governor secured a first-of-its-kind federal waiver that provides unprecedented flexibility by allowing counties to use federal funds to support innovative strategies that keep children out of foster care and in safe, stable homes.